

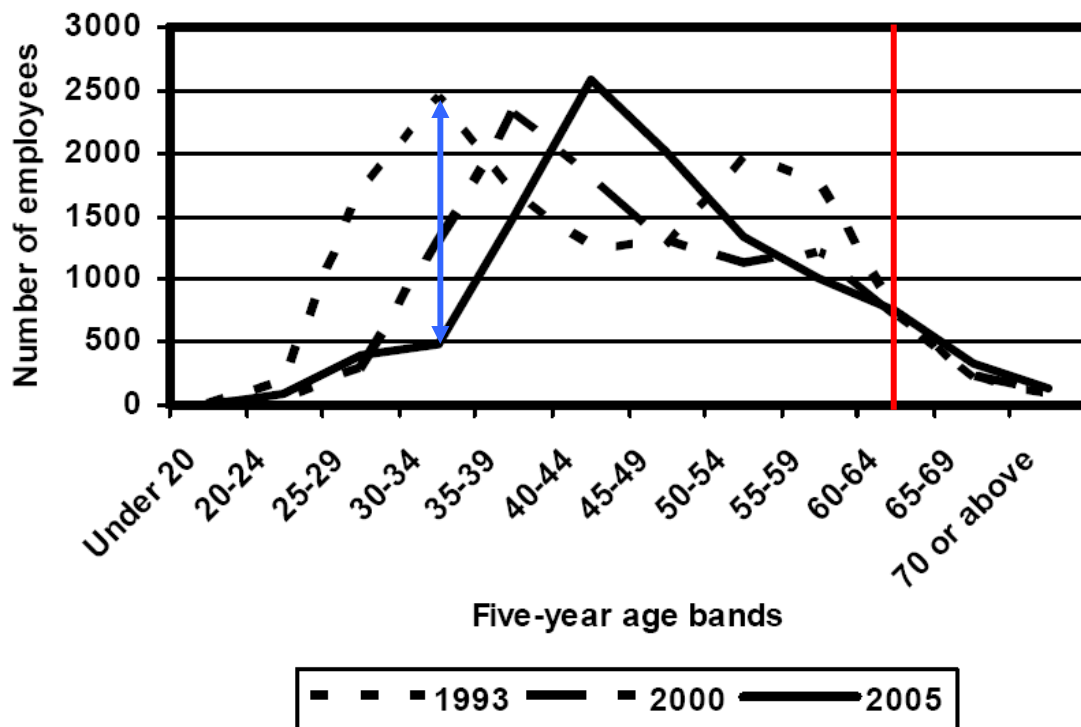
Thank you, Chairman Udall and Ranking Member Hall, for providing the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, NASA's largest federal employee Union, the opportunity to present our perspective on the workforce challenges facing NASA today.

IFPTE's primary interest in testifying is to provide advocacy for maintaining the technical excellence and independence of NASA's civil service workforce. However, our interest extends more broadly to a deep commitment to NASA's success not only in the near term but, more importantly, in the long term, consistent with the true spirit of the Vision for Space Exploration.

NASA is not facing a workforce crisis; it is facing a fiscal crisis. The President's Vision outlines a bold and ambitious set of milestones, yet NASA is not being given the bold and ambitious budget needed for success. As long as the Vision remains largely an unfunded mandate, all of NASA's missions and its workforce will remain at risk.

The last time a President asked NASA to send humans to the moon, NASA had nearly 36,000 civil servants on board and an annual budget of more than \$30 billion adjusted for inflation; and we were not being asked to fix design problems with the Shuttle and build a Space Station at the same time. Yet today, NASA's civil service workforce has been halved and its budget reduced by more than 40%. Until the fundamental discrepancy between mission and budget is corrected, NASA's problems cannot be properly solved.

A workforce demographic problem is readily apparent in Fig. 2-2 of the NRC report:



- The real problem is the nearly five-fold reduction in the 30-34 year old range between 1993 and 2005 indicated by the vertical blue arrows.
- Management however remains obsessed with the faux problem of the right-hand tail of the distribution to the right of the vertical red line, which represents only about 5% of the workforce and has been stable for more than a decade.

IFPTE applauds the National Research Council for its thoughtful analysis and recommendations on NASA's workforce plan. The report recognizes the immediate need to engage aggressively in the education, hands-on training, and recruitment of the next generation of NASA employees.

IFPTE is however disappointed with the National Academy of Public Administration report as it fails to question management assertions. It accepts as fact uncertain or mistaken premises that NASA's budget will not grow, that its current employees' skills are seriously mismatched with NASA's "new" mission, and thus that NASA must reduce its science, aeronautics, and technology development activities and workforce. We fundamentally disagree.

IFPTE continues to support the "ten healthy Centers" philosophy initiated by Dr. Griffin and we reject criticism of this plan in the NAPA report. We encourage Dr. Griffin to persevere in his efforts to de-centralize the Constellation program. Unfortunately, current policies continue to severely stress NASA's research centers. The solution cannot be to convert them into mini-operational centers or to subject them to a BRAC-like process. Rather, revitalizing cutting edge R&D at the field centers is crucial for a safe and meaningful return to the moon, as well as for delivering on our promises in Science and Aeronautics.

To reinvigorate NASA's workforce in support of all its missions and to maintain America's prestige and leadership in science and aerospace R&D, IFPTE offers the following seven recommendations:

- 1. Congress should fund NASA as close to the authorized level as possible and prohibit transfer authority across major accounts.**
 - IFPTE proposes at least an additional \$300 million for Science, \$420 million for Exploration Systems, \$200 million for Aeronautics, \$30 million for Education, and \$50 million for critical facilities over the President's FY2008 proposal.
- 2. Congress should preserve the technical excellence and independence of NASA's civil-service workforce.**
 - NASA should fund CS salaries directly to the centers, independent of programs, to allow for effective matrix management and to end the scapegoating of CS employees.
- 3. NASA should provide stability for its current workforce to reassure its future workforce.**
 - The Administrator should publicly reject any use of RIFs so that the best and brightest young engineering and science graduates once again see NASA as a great career move.
- 4. IFPTE supports the NRC recommendations.**
 - NASA must begin an aggressive campaign to recruit young employees while the current staff is still on board to transfer its knowledge.
- 5. IFPTE strongly opposes three NAPA recommendations.**
 - IFPTE opposes:
 - any authorization to use a BRAC-like process to close centers,
 - any streamlining of RIF procedures,
 - any authority to unilaterally terminate retirement-eligible employees.

6. IFPTE supports enhancing voluntary buyout authority.

- IFPTE supports the post-employment extension of medical coverage and an increase in the buy-out incentive up to an individual's severance pay capped at one-year's salary.

7. IFPTE strongly opposes any new authority to facilitate the conversion of permanent positions to term positions.

- IFPTE opposes the Administration's proposed term-conversion legislation.

In closing, IFPTE is very grateful for the bi-partisan Congressional rescue that has thus far protected NASA's workforce from misguided RIF plans. Let us now turn from the era of workforce damage control to the more positive task of re-building NASA's future workforce.

Once again, Chairman Udall and Ranking Member Hall, IFPTE thanks you for inviting us to bring these important issues to the attention of the Subcommittee.